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Teachers and other school personnel may feel anxious about having a student with hemophilia in their school. This booklet is designed to alleviate those fears by presenting facts about hemophilia and provides a quick reference guide on what to do in different situations of bleeding. Educators need to be aware that students with hemophilia do not bleed any faster than other students; however, they may have prolonged or delayed bleeding.

This booklet uses the terms “he,” “him” and “his” throughout the text as most people with hemophilia are males. This does not deny that many girls may have bleeding disorders.
WHAT IS HEMOPHILIA?

Hemophilia is a hereditary bleeding disorder, usually affecting males. This results in prolonged bleeding, primarily into muscles and/or joints. People with hemophilia have difficulty with their blood clotting and may bleed longer than normal. This can be prevented if they receive appropriate treatment.

Hemophilia can affect any race, nationality or social class. It occurs in approximately 1:10,000 male births. Occasionally, female carriers of hemophilia will have bleeding symptoms.

Hemophilia has three levels of severity: mild, moderate and severe. Severity of bleeding may differ from individual to individual but they all have the potential to bleed with injury. At present there is no cure for hemophilia; however, individuals with hemophilia can lead a relatively normal life while taking preventative measures to avoid bleeding episodes. There are treatment options available and necessary for many students with hemophilia. It is important for school personnel to acknowledge the student’s concern of a bleeding episode, and to recognize signs of bleeding and take appropriate action.
COMMON BLEEDS

MOUTH BLEEDS Bleeding in the mouth may be troublesome as it is messy, but it is usually minor. Blood mixed with saliva sometimes makes the bleeding look worse than it is. Encourage the student to spit out rather than swallowing blood to avoid an upset stomach.

IF A STUDENT HAS OOZING FROM A CUT IN THE MOUTH, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

• Put on protective gloves.
• Apply firm continuous pressure to the site of bleeding, if possible with a cold cloth for 20 minutes.
• Encourage popsicles or ice.
• Call the parents/guardian for instructions if bleeding has not stopped after 20 minutes.
NOSE BLEEDS Nose bleeds may vary in students and are usually not serious. A nose bleed is treated the same as for any other student.

IF A STUDENT HAS A NOSE BLEED, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

• Put on protective gloves.
• Position the student sitting with head slightly forward.
• Apply firm continuous pressure under the bridge (bone) of the nose with a cold cloth for 20 minutes.
• Encourage popsicles or ice.
• Call the parents/guardian for instructions if bleeding has not stopped after 20–30 minutes.
JOINT AND MUSCLE BLEEDS  The beginning of a bleeding episode in a joint and/or muscle may not be readily apparent. The student may be reluctant to use a limb or he may tell you it feels funny or that he thinks that he is having a bleed. If there is bleeding in a joint or muscle, it will gradually swell, feel hot to touch and become painful. The joints that most commonly bleed are ankles, knees and elbows. Muscle bleeds can occur anywhere in the body.

IF A STUDENT HAS A JOINT OR MUSCLE BLEED, WE RECOMMEND:

R.I.C.E.

R - REST; Keep the student still to avoid further injury while waiting for the parents/guardian.
I - Apply ICE; do not leave longer than 20 minutes and make sure there is a cloth layer between ice and bare skin.
C - COMPRESSION; wrap limb with elastic bandage.
E - ELEVATE the body part.
**SUPERFICIAL BRUIISING** Students with hemophilia often have bruises on their extremities. These usually are superficial and generally are no cause for alarm. Notice must be paid to the student who expresses ongoing pain at the bruised site.

**LACERATIONS** If bleeding occurs from a cut, scrape or laceration, the first aid treatment is the same as with any other student.

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**IF A STUDENT WITH HEMOPHILIA SUSTAINS A CUT OR LACERATION, WE RECOMMEND YOU:**

- Put on protective gloves.
- Clean cut with a skin antiseptic.
- Apply **firm continuous pressure** until bleeding stops.
- Apply a band-aid or dressing.
- Contact the student’s parents/guardian for instructions or seek medical help if bleeding continues for more than 20–30 minutes.
LIFE-THREATENING BLEEDS

BLEEDING INTO THE HEAD, NECK, CHEST OR ABDOMEN MAY BE LIFE-THREATENING AND REQUIRES IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.

In the absence of symptoms, notify the student’s parents/guardian as symptoms may appear later.

HEAD INJURY  All head injuries are to be considered serious because of the risk of a brain hemorrhage.

Symptoms of a brain hemorrhage are:

- Loss of consciousness
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dilated or unequal pupils
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Irritability
- Confusion
- Lethargy
- Unsteady gait

IF THE STUDENT SUFFERS A HEAD INJURY, WE RECOMMEND YOU:

- SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.
- Notify the student’s parents/guardian immediately.
NECK INJURY OR BLEEDS Neck bleeding is a serious bleed because of the potential of blocking the airway. Any injury to the area as well as the student’s expression of pain and tenderness should be attended to promptly. Failure to do so could result in the student having difficulty in swallowing or breathing.

**IF A STUDENT IS SUSPECTED OF HAVING A NECK BLEED, WE RECOMMEND YOU:**
- SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.
- Notify the student’s parents/guardian immediately.

CHEST INJURY OR BLEED Injuries to the chest wall may be very painful if there is bleeding into the muscles between the ribs. Bleeding in this area needs prompt medical attention.

**IF A STUDENT SUFFERS A BLOW TO THE CHEST AREA, WHETHER THERE ARE ANY SIGNS OF BLEEDING OR NOT, WE RECOMMEND YOU:**
- SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.
- Notify the student’s parents/guardian immediately.
ABDOMINAL INJURY OR BLEED A blow to the abdomen (e.g., from a ball or foot, or falling onto equipment) is serious because of the potential injury to vital internal organs. Injury can occur without bruising.

IF A STUDENT SUFFERS A BLOW TO THE ABDOMEN, WE RECOMMEND YOU:
• SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.
• Notify the student’s parents/guardian immediately.

Please remember that most bleeds are routine. The student will usually inform you when he is experiencing a bleed. Emergencies are RARE.
Regular exercise is very important for students with hemophilia. Communication between the parents and the physical education teacher will contribute to appropriate activity. Physiotherapists from the hemophilia treatment centre can provide advice and resources if necessary.

A student with hemophilia should be encouraged to partake in physical activities that will keep his muscles and joints strong. Studies have shown that the student whose joints are supported by well-developed muscles is able to better withstand day-to-day trauma.

Participation in sports and recreational activities can enhance the student’s self-esteem and can bring him a sense of belonging. It will teach him about teamwork and about fair play.

However, after a student with hemophilia has suffered an injury or a bleed, he should not participate until the injury has completely recovered. This may mean recess indoors and missing gym class.
SPORTS TO AVOID

• Football
• Wrestling
• Ice hockey
• Soccer—full contact

• Lacrosse—full contact
• Downhill skiing
• Boxing
• Rugby

Students with hemophilia will want to try many sports. It is recommended that any of the above sports be discussed with the hemophilia treatment centre and parents before allowing him to participate.

ABSENTEEISM Absenteeism may occur because the student with hemophilia may occasionally be unable to participate in his usual activities due to a bleeding episode. Consideration must be given to meeting his educational needs, be it through the use of a tutor and/or rescheduling assignments or exams.

The student’s parent/guardian and teachers must be sensitive to the student’s behaviour in that occasionally he may use his hemophilia for secondary gains or to get out of an activity.
SUMMARY

1. Students with hemophilia do not bleed faster, they bleed longer.

2. They will not bleed to death from a cut or a scrape.

3. First aid is the same as for any other student. Bleeding from severe injuries can be controlled with proper medical care.

4. Informed and responsive school personnel play a major role in the growth and development of the student with hemophilia. If in doubt, call the parents/guardian or the bleeding disorder treatment centre.

5. The bleeding disorder treatment centre is a good source of information.
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We would like to thank all the nurses who reviewed this booklet and gave us feedback.
If you still have questions or concerns after reading this booklet, please call the local bleeding disorder nurse coordinator.

Local Bleeding Disorder Clinic

Tel.

Bleeding Disorder Nurse Coordinator

Tel.

Clinic Director

Tel.

CANADIAN HEMOPHILIA SOCIETY:

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